

















# The myth of harmony

Colin Lucas

PATRICE HIGONNET

Class, Ideology, and the Rights of Nobles during the French Revolution  
222 pp. Oxford University Press.  
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Nobles had a distinctly rough time during the French Revolution. They were assaulted in their persons, their property, and their rights. Their property and sometimes their persons were attacked in various places in 1789 and 1792. They were the main losers in the August 1789 abolition of the seigneurial system, albeit clothed initially in generous redemption terms. In 1790, nobility itself was abolished. During the Revolution as a whole, perhaps some 25,000 nobles abandoned France. Increasingly stiff penalties were exacted against those who remained. Their property was sequestered to the nation and began to be auctioned off. Their relatives suffered increasing disabilities. Even when, after the Terror, legislation had to take account of the fact that many people other than nobles had emigrated, the loosening of sanctions was not extended to nobles.

During the radical offensive of 1793-94, nobles were their most vulnerable. Although nobility was not officially a crime, it was certainly often quoted as a reason for arrest and it was clearly an aggravating circumstance in the presumption of guilt. In 1793, radicals campaigned for the exclusion of nobles from all official positions. This was enacted in 1794, though repealed three months later on the fall of Robespierre. The peak of legislative intolerance was reached during one of the Directory's Jacobin phases when, in November 1797, nobles were deprived of their civil rights and ceased to be French.

Of course, all of this was wiped out with the Consulate. As is well known, Napoleon presided over the reconciliation of the élites and this involved ending the discriminatory legislation and a general amnesty.

In practice, things were not as bleak as this catalogue might lead one to suppose. Despite incidents, anti-nobility was not a feature of the legislative revolution before 1791. However, uncomfortable things became, nobles did not stand out as the exclusive or even the principal victims of either popular or official directed repression. They constituted perhaps as little as one-eighth of the *émigrés*. A great many of them stayed on quietly in France throughout these years. A significant number espoused the Revolution and played active roles even during the Jacobin period. Legislation always proved impossible to apply in practice. At the height of the war, roughly half the army officers were pre-revolutionary and hence nobles. The Revolution could not do without them and, if a defeated noble general was a corrupt aristocrat, a victorious one was surely a patriot. The anathemas of the Directory remained largely unimplemented. Finally, although there were individual disasters, the nobility in general did not emerge from this period badly damaged in its property base. Even *émigré* families managed to hold on to, or to recover, significant amounts.

Revolutionary anti-nobility was more than rhetoric; but its substance was less than the evocation and destruction of the nobles as the hegemonic class of the *ancien régime*. The contradiction between a categorical "discourse" and the fragmentary reality is mirrored in the contradiction between the two current interpretations of the historical meaning of the French Revolution. For the Marxists, the Revolution marked the emergence of the bourgeoisie society through the destruction of feudalism. The radicalization of the Revolution represented the bourgeoisie's realization of its historical function. The Jacobins were the most conscious sector of the bourgeoisie, for they understood that their class interests required a popular alliance against the nobility, in order to achieve the final destruction of feudalism.

Modern revisionists prefer to see the Revolution as a society evolving

towards a homogeneous élite of property-owners, among whom distinctions of birth and privilege were increasingly confused and irrelevant. 1789 constituted an important step in the crystallization of this élite. The fact that such a fusion of élites did not stabilize is attributed to a series of political *dérangements*. These fortuitous slippages were provoked by revolutionary circumstance and are explicable by the detailed history of the period. Napoleon's revolutionary settlement finally baptized the new-born property élite that the decade of the 1790s had laboured to bring forth.

Whatever their relative merits in explaining the origins and consequences of the Revolution, neither of these theses is wholly satisfactory when viewed from inside the Revolution. The Marxist version is based upon an inaccurate description of pre-revolutionary society; it formulates a monolithic interpretation of Jacobinism that seems simplistic; and in particular it fails to explain the disparity between practical and rhetorical anti-nobility. The revisionists' reliance upon the concept of *dérangement* is weak. Although it is initially appealing to those of an empirical approach, it does not properly explain why the defence of property and of individual rights did not prevent the victory of radicalism and the alliance with the popular movement which must, in this interpretation, be deemed unnatural.

Thus, Patrice Higonnet's study intervenes in a crucial problem of interpretation. His contribution is one of considerable merit and importance; it combines wide reading with patient theoretical reflection. He has set out to reconcile in some degree Marxists and revisionists and to provide some explanation of the contradictions in revolutionary anti-nobility. One may doubt whether he has in fact reconciled the two schools; one may consider his thesis to be more internal to the problem than he allows; one may debate a fair number of his detailed arguments. Nonetheless, he has formulated at least one major concept which allows a new and frequently convincing interpretation of the behaviour of the revolutionaries, an interpretation that historians of the period will have either to incorporate or to refute squarely.

Professor Higonnet's argument rests upon two plans. In the first place, though closer to the revisionists than to the Marxists, he sees the emergence of a property-owning élite as less complete than suggested by a pre-revolutionary society in considerable composite class of nobles had not properly displaced an older hostility of bourgeois to nobles. A developing capitalism and notions of individualism were provoking confusing currents in the 1770s and 1780s. Although he does little to demonstrate this other than by the fact of revolutionary anti-nobility itself, Higonnet is probably right. Revisionist writing in the 1960s and 1970s on the nature of the élite now seems too categorical.

It is this social confusion which allows Higonnet to develop his argument in terms of an ideological confusion. At its roots lies what he terms "bourgeois universalism". This concept, sketched by Marc Riché in 1974 and developed in 1978 by François Furet in *Le Siècle de la Révolution*, is a new moral order constructed by the alliance of the virtuous poor and the virtuous, propertied Jacobins, united in moral and political equality. The universalism expressing itself in anti-nobility shifted the question away from property and *égalité de jouissances* towards the task of creating a new moral order constructed by the alliance of the virtuous poor and the virtuous, propertied Jacobins, united in moral and political equality. The

At bottom, however, there was an inescapable contradiction between individualism and universalism. Higonnet argues that much of the revolutionary struggle can be read in terms of the slow realization of this contradiction leading to the final abandonment of individualism and the harmonious community. He suggests that, although property owners were not class-divided either before or after the Revolution, struggles occurred during the Revolution that were of a class nature. These derived from the working-out of the ideological confusion of bourgeois universalism, since the pursuit of this myth led the bourgeoisie to harry the nobles as nobles rather than to ally with them as property-owners. For a time, the myth of the harmonious society in property did not exist proved more powerful than the hard realities of the interests of property.

Higonnet essentially divides the Revolution into three phases. Until late in 1791, it was assumed that nobles would participate in the harmonious community. There appeared little contradiction between property and community (after all, the abolition of feudalism involved transforming lucrative rights into property). The abolition of nobility should be seen as an anti-corporatist act necessary to the single society and not as anti-nobility.

The second phase is the rising tide of anti-nobility under the Girondins and then the Mountain. Higonnet terms this "opportunistic anti-nobility". It was the vision of virtue and the community which allowed the bourgeoisie both to seek allies for its defence on the more radical and popular left and also to brand nobles as corrupt and selfish enemies of the public good. With the Girondins, this image was applied to *émigrés* and their noble allies; by the time Jacobin radicalism was at its height it had been extended to the nobles who remained generally.

Anti-nobility was opportunistic among the Girondins because it was designed to procure the basis of a popular alliance. With the Mountain, it was opportunistic in another sense. It had allowed a popular alliance by obscuring the fundamental contradiction over the question of property, permitting indeed some bourgeois regulation of individualism in the name of community. Yet, such a contradiction was inescapable by the end of 1793. In the mouths of Robespierre and Saint-Just, anti-nobility became simply a displacement of contradictions.

Universalism expressing itself in anti-nobility shifted the question away from property and *égalité de jouissances* towards the task of creating a new moral order constructed by the alliance of the virtuous poor and the virtuous, propertied Jacobins, united in moral and political equality. The

exclusion of the nobles became the symbolic representation of social regeneration. Nobles became the epitome of corruption and evil in a war of republican virtue against vice. If this projection of bourgeois universalism succeeded in concealing the tension between individualism and community as far as the Incorruptible was concerned, it hardly did so for the *sans-culottes*, who no longer viewed nobles in 1794 with the loathing that they had shown in 1793.

The post-Thermidorian period constitutes the third phase. Here, the vacillating legislative stance on nobles, together with the slight practical effect of the Law of 1797, reflected the growing distance between a small number of legislators and the bulk of property-owners. The former remained wedded to universalism, the latter were increasingly devoted to individualism.

Higonnet's study is essentially one of ideology and in this respect it is often convincing. The concept of individualism, and its relationship to understanding the political discourse of both the Constituent Assembly and of the Terror. Nonetheless, the use to which he puts his thesis seems open to some criticisms, of which two may be voiced here.

In the first place, Higonnet has perhaps restricted his field too much by concentrating on the nobility. Although universalism is the key to understanding attitudes to the nobility, and although these latter epitomize the universalist perception, the implications that he draws have wider resonances. He therefore over-emphasizes, perhaps, the importance of the noble issue at times while elsewhere his argument appears weak for not being inserted into a wider context. Thus, for example, the whole radical discourse about universalism (and this began almost with the Revolution) well before it surfaced in this book) identified a broad range of persons and behaviour patterns as corruptions of the public good. Although broadly lumped together as *aristocrates*, they were never confined to nobles even at the height of the Jacobin Terror, whatever the personal preferences of Robespierre and Saint-Just. Nobles were always part of a spectrum that included priests, food-rationers, speculators, religious *fanatiques*, the over-rich, deserters, and so on.

Higonnet's treatment of the crucial Girondin move to the left is perhaps the least convincing passage in the book precisely because he confines himself to their visibly specious anti-nobility. Their attitude and hence the relevance of his own thesis can only be understood in the context of the defence of the harmonious community against a number of corrupting influences, some of which, notably refractory priests, were seen at this

point as much more dangerous than the nobles.

In the second place, Higonnet uses the phrase "bourgeois universalism" doubtless as a deliberate counterpoint to "bourgeois individualism". Yet, it obscures its nature. He does not really make enough of the social confusion to which he premises his argument. Its roots in traditional noble perceptions as it did in civic humanism, as universalism had a broad appeal throughout property-owning society because it rendered coherent and bound together this society in this, it changed the ideological middle ground held by nobles and bourgeoisie alike under the Constituent Assembly whatever rejectionist fringes may have existed on either side. One could say that Higonnet's account of the universalism as meaning only that universalism was monopolized by radical bourgeois politicians to make them to control the political system.

Indeed, it is never entirely clear how representative the radical exponents of universalism really were. He derides the Marxists for seeing the Girondins and later the Mountain as the only valid interpreters of the bourgeoisie's profound aspirations. Yet, he himself seems almost to make them the most representative exponents of bourgeois ("false") consciousness. Ultimately, much of the argument about the Mountain is based on Robespierre and Saint-Just. It really needs to be established whether the particular emphases of these two faithfully encapsulated Montagnard perceptions, let alone those of the property-owners at large.

Higonnet leaves a curious impression in the social underpinning of this ideology. It is never quite clear whether he is using the phrase "Revolutionary bourgeoisie" to mean the bourgeoisie in the Revolution or a number of bourgeois revolutionaries. In one place, he states that "the Revolutionary bourgeoisie acted as control of politics in 1792", yet elsewhere he argues that the whole argument assumes that bourgeois universalism presided over in 1789. Who exactly is involved in "the Revolutionary bourgeoisie's decision... to find a solution... on the left" or, as it is put 130 pages later, "the bourgeois revolutionaries' decision to follow the more daring, progressive course"?

There is here an ambiguity about the progress of the struggle between "true" consciousness (individualism) and "false" consciousness (universalism). Higonnet says that some sectors were losing faith in universalism (reflected, for example, in the contrast between Barnave and Brissot in 1791); yet he then loses sight of this. He will not really admit to the extension under the Directory, when the problem had really moved on to be that of the relationship between conservatism and counter-revolution. The extensive protests against the popular invasion of the Tuilleries on June 20, 1792, and the widespread Federalist rebellion of 1793 demonstrate how little the property-owners outside Paris shared a radical popular alliance. *Emblems of Reason* by Barbault Bray of Jean Starobinski's survey of the images of the French Revolution, has recently appeared (1980, Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, £8.39 0915 5). At the time of the book's original publication in France in 1973, the TLS reviewer noted that the contemplative duties suggested by the title "were left to artists of other nations, generally bearing witness to the conflict from a safe distance".

## On an Etching by J. S. Cotman

"I wept to see the visionary man"  
— Dryden's Virgil

There is no richness in this scene,  
No life to answer his abstracted stare—  
And what we take it that these emblems mean  
Is but the index of his inward care;

The summer-house will always stay  
About to fall, the river make no sound  
As Letha-like it beats his strength away  
And lapses to the darkness underground;

And poised above the silent flood  
The couchant lion waits, a mask of stone,  
Impassive by the tree that will not bud,  
The spell-bound youth, beleaguered and alone.

The landscape is an open gaze  
At which the artist and his subject gaze;  
When acid eats the plate his skills engrave  
Wan-hope, a mind that falters and decays.

Dick Davis

# The anxiety of immanence

John Beer

JEAN-PIERRE MILLEUR

Vision and Revision: Coleridge's Art of Immanence  
188pp. University of California Press.  
£15.20.  
0 520 04447 9

*Vision and Revision* is a study with a firm theory behind it. Human beings are now born into a world where they find themselves inevitably belated, a world which they cannot easily understand. The anxiety which this situation arouses in them causes them to defend their threatened identity by trying to reach an absolute Word, a fixed and determinate version of reality which would have the solid reality of a sacred text. If they do not, however, they will constantly change in the light of their growing knowledge, breaking down into a mediated world which will restore to them their proper space as human beings. Revision, on this view, is the central human activity.

It is inevitable that those who read the world in this way should be attracted to the early Romantics, who themselves lived in a world where the political upheavals of the time were shifting the foundations of order. And Coleridge might seem particularly relevant to the terms of such a discussion since, as Jean-Pierre Milleur has noticed, he devoted some of the most interesting and productive years of his life to revision of various kinds. In 1815, when he was revising his poem for the collection of *Sibylline Leaves*, he was also writing an autobiographical piece, originally intended to stand as a first volume to that edition, it seems, offering a revised account of his own life as context for the poetry he was now presenting. In addition, his three great poems of the supernatural (or "mystery poems" as Professor Milleur calls them) were subjected to significant revision during these years: *The Ancient Mariner* received its marginal glosses, "Kubla Khan" its Preface and "Christabel" its Conclusion to Part Two.

Each of these revisions Milleur sees as serving the same cause, that of a Coleridge whose own creativity had been an occasion of deep anxiety — never more perhaps than when it welled up in the production of "Kubla Khan" — and whose failure to continue writing good poetry was a source of even greater anxiety. His revisions are seen as attempts to cope with such anxiety by presenting his poems in a more significant form, so that the reader may grasp their problematic status more fully. In the course of making such revisions Coleridge ceases to be the anxious author of the early poems, seeking to establish a firm identity for himself; he becomes instead an immanent presence in his own writings. One result is that he reaches a proper appreciation of the Bible, the true Word, as he understands how, when all lesser words are viewed in subordination to that originating Word, human affairs fall into place and can be understood as part of a mediated history. So by 1816 he is producing his little treatise, *The Statesman's Manual*, or *The Bible as Guide to Politics*. Skill and imagination, in which he can write, are said human events in the light of biblical prophecy.

In some ways an interesting history of Coleridge's development, and not altogether mistaken. The main problem for the reader is not to accept Coleridge was indulging in such a revision, including self-revision, from 1815, which he clearly was — but to accept this particular theory of the revisions.

It is hard to agree, for instance, that Coleridge created the glosses for *The Ancient Mariner* as a way of acknowledging that his original poem had been mistaken, in trying, or as determining meanings. Milleur's argument for supposing this to be the Mariner's desolation just before the dawn of his religious conversion and his fixedness of yearning towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward...

This is described as inventing an elaborately circumstantial interpretation of the moon's significance which is apparently aimed at making one point: the moon does not fit into whatever figurative structure which (sic) the unrecognized part of the Mariner's self... is projecting onto the external world.

But this is surely over-ingenious. The moon and stars are not here "an unpolluted otherness", as is being maintained; the continuing gloss compares them to lords arriving home to a greeting of silent joy. The effect of the marginal glosses as a whole is rather to create a further framework of significance for the poem: indeed, it is only in recent years that critics have grasped how very differently the poem reads without them. If Coleridge had wished to draw attention to the poem's contradictions he would surely not have adopted so indirect a method.

The truth seems to be simpler. Coleridge set out to write a poem which was primarily a drama of the human heart. He allowed such free play to the contradictions of human affairs that the poem would make sense only if the reader could, by an act of sympathetic attention, open his heart in unison with the Mariner at the crucial moment. But seeing how the poem had been received, how little its central point was appreciated, he later gave the poem a new framework which, without negating his point, would render it available within a more familiar, Christian setting.

The conclusion to Part Two of "Christabel" is a different case. Here we have the picture of the father responding with anger to his loved child because, perhaps, that is the only way his love can find expression. Milleur subsumes this into the phenomena of the "word-surprise" as discussed by psycho-analysis: for him it opens the poem to a psycho-analytic reading that would centre in Coleridge's indecision as to whether Gertrude is a good or bad character. This strikes one as far-fetched, at least as it stands. There is no doubt some connection with the ambiguity of Gertrude, and (more directly) with Christabel's father's anger when he sees his daughter's unconscious imitation of her, but the main thrust is surely forward, towards a mitigated consummation where all such interplays between apparent good and evil, between the energies of anger and those of love, would have been brought into resolution. Coleridge cannot at present bring it off, but in the meantime he offers this riddling episode, with its touch of "I could an if I would", to tense and tantalize the reader with suggestions of revelations yet to come.

"Kubla Khan" is the poem best suited to Milleur's theories, since this is clearly at one level a poem about the nature of the Word. Kubla, creating by decree, is both a belated mortal and a tyrant whose word, though powerful, cannot match in effectiveness the original, inaccessible Word of true creativity. Milleur interprets the whole poem in these terms, arguing, for example, that by altering the manuscript reading "Mount Amara" with its echo of *Paradise Lost* to "Mount Abora", Coleridge is substituting for a mountain that has an existence in the written word a mountain which, having no such provenance, is a symbol of the original Word, generating the alphabet and all subsequent words without being contained anywhere in them. Under his theory revising the Preface is the necessary revisionary step for Coleridge of taking, giving the experience of composing his poem a context for the reader and restoring him from the faded world of Kubla, belated and beset by his urge to define, into a mediated world, as seen in the account of the encounter between Coleridge himself and the person from Porlock.

Once again this seems to be reversing the order of things. Coleridge's object in writing the Preface, surely, was not to find a way of escaping from the anxiety inherent in the creative act, but to divert attention from the extravagant claims which he was making for himself as poet in the last stanza of the poem. If the Preface is an act of mediation it is so in a more old-fashioned sense, setting up a mode of discourse between himself and his reader which will enable the poem to be approached without embarrassment. The poem is now offered as no more than a "psychological curiosity", though the hint, the tantalization, are still there in the subtitle "A Vision in a Dream".

Such attempts to fit Coleridge to a theory rather than to find a theory for Coleridge also pervade the account of the "conversation poems". This is, of course, a description which Coleridge himself gave to only one of his poems; he classified the others as "meditative poems in blank verse", "odes" and so on. The term serves to indicate a certain informality of diction which runs through them, but should not be applied too fixedly. Milleur wishes to propose a paradigm against which they should all be read:

The speaker begins with a feeling of absence, ranging from seriousness from idleness, to loss, to despair. His attention fixes on some object or event in the external scene, with which he becomes closely engaged... It might be said that he escapes a moment of deepening, perhaps even dangerous (because increasingly straitened) subjectivity by "writing" his feelings onto nature, thereby objectifying self and turning nature into a kind of text of his own psyche.

This is one way of reading "Dejection", and is not without some relevance to "This Lime Tree Bower"; but it distorts Coleridge to claim that anxiety always precedes and conditions his view of nature. In the poetry itself it is often presented as an intervening check, stemming the flow of an otherwise carefree flow of speculation. There seems to be no good reason to see anxiety as dominating the opening lines of "The Eolian Harp", for instance, or of "Frost at Midnight".

If the attempt to fix the terms of Coleridge's predicament by giving predominance throughout to his anxiety does violence to the more subtle dialectic between creativity and anxiety in his poetic career, it also misrepresents work such as that on the Bible in *The Statesman's Manual*. It is Milleur's contention that Coleridge here escapes from his dilemma by embracing the Bible, the Word which precedes all other words, the Text that guarantees all other texts. Having no authority, the Bible has complete authority; in its light all other texts must submit to revisions in the course of which their authors will discover, like Coleridge, their own Immanence.

There are some statements in *The Statesman's Manual* which might support such a reading, notably Coleridge's assertion that the Bible is unique by reason of its "immediate derivation from God", and that each of its elements is "a living Germ, in which the Present involves the Future, and in the Future the Infinite exists potentially". But to go no further than this is to miss the degree to which this essay, also, is shot through with contradictions that have long existed in Coleridge's thought. For the *idea* of the Bible so envisaged is separable from its actual content. Although Coleridge might proclaim its immediate derivation from God, he was, as Milleur acknowledges, well aware of the findings of biblical scholars in Germany, which exposed the separate contributions of various authors and demonstrated their vulnerability. He was forced to see it not as "unique" but as "special". But this did not really solve his problem since, while the Word might stand as guarantor of that human imagination which has its "repetition in the finite human mind", it could equally powerfully negate the imagination when it spoke to man in tones of admonition and accusation. Both kinds of "word" are operative as early as "The Eolian Harp". He has simply found a new way of organizing his problems, therefore, not a solution.

So with *Biographia Literaria*. Milleur points out that much of the argument of the second volume is concerned with establishing the priority of interpretation over the original poetic act, and in particular with questioning

Wordsworth's authority over his own poetry. Coleridge's revision is now being directed to the work of his friend. But the attempt to show that Coleridge is engaged in proving his superiority to Wordsworth by becoming an immanent poet, while Wordsworth remains fixed in the establishment of his own identity, is unconvincing. In particular the reading of the poem "To William Wordsworth", which sees it as establishing for the first time Coleridge's new stance of immanence, by which "it is the Coleridge who speaks to men, not the Wordsworth who speaks above them without really believing in them, who is truly prophetic" is hard to swallow. It is very difficult to find any challenge at all, explicit or implicit, to Wordsworth, in the poem.

The true problem with this study is that it is based on premises inadequate to the matter in hand. Beginning from the belief that revision is automatically a good activity, it assumes that Coleridge's period of most intensive revision is likely to have been his most fruitful. But revision can take place for many reasons: it can be obfuscating and self-deceiving as well as humble and self-clarifying. So with Coleridge. His true period of creative immanence came much earlier, when he was opening his mind to new ideas and carrying out his intellectual explorations in the company of

Wordsworth, Davy and others. The revisions of 1815-17 took place because the body of thinking which he had been exploring at that time had ceased to hold together. He was being forced to revise his concept of himself in a way which caused him to strain towards a recognizable identity, not surpass it. In the case of "Kubla Khan", for example, the preface of 1816 replaces an earlier one, written apparently soon after the poem was composed but never published in his lifetime, which begins, "This fragment with a good deal more, not recoverable, composed, in a sort of Reverie...". The 1816 version begins, "In the summer of the year 1797, the Author, then in ill health, had retired to a lonely farm-house...". In which account is the author less self-conscious, more immanent? Similarly the original version of "The Ancient Mariner" suggests an author more immanent, less striving, than the current version of 1817.

Reading this book is not easy, nor is it helped by the occasional misquotations or lapses in syntax. Few readers will find it worth the effort. There is an intelligent mind at work, however, and if one feels disappointment it is because, paradoxically, a study which directs itself against fixity in literature turns out to have been too early fixed in its own, inadequate theory.

## Charles Darwin

1809-1882

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## Unhappy families

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CHARLES LINDHOLM

*Generosity and Jealousy: The Swat Pukhtun of Northern Pakistan*  
321pp. Guildford: Columbia University Press.  
\$36.40 (paperback, \$18.20).  
0 231 05389 3

Charles Lindholm is a professional anthropologist who spent two years in Swat, close to the Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier, studying the Pukhtun, one of the warlike Pathan tribes. He might well have used his extensive findings and prodigious statistics to produce a conventional anthropological monograph covering the whole gamut of economic, political and social phenomena which characterize Pukhtun society and culture. But fortunately for the general reader, Lindholm has eschewed the temptation to cram all his field data into a single volume and instead focused his meticulous observation and power of analysis on one central theme. The elaboration of this theme, which is only partly indicated by the title of the book, provides a remarkable insight into the functioning of an Islamic social system deeply rooted in tribal tradition, and only superficially resembling the social and ideological background of any of the other Muslim populations of Southern Asia.

Those familiar with the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent may be reminded of some of their own observations, but few will have drawn from their personal experiences conclusions as stark and disturbing as those presented in *Generosity and Jealousy*. From its pages emerges the horrifying picture of a society in which the courtesy and generosity of men

acting as hosts to honoured guests may thinly veil the underlying hostility towards their closest kinsmen, but leave clearly exposed their heartless and contemptuous treatment of women, including their own wives. Anyone old enough to have observed the intimate relations between masters and slaves in tribal societies of the Eastern Himalayas, will be struck by the contrast between the cordiality and gentleness in the attitude of slave-owners towards the men and women who were their absolute property, and the studied coldness and cruelty evinced by Pukhtun men towards the women enslaved within the walls of their own houses. The author states explicitly that relations between husbands and wives tend to be "warlike" and that tenderness is absent in sexual relations, sadistic undertones prevailing even in romantic encounters, rare as these may be.

Pukhtun ideology stresses that all women are repulsive, despicable and altogether inferior to males, an assessment passed on from generation to generation. Hence men are supposed to prefer homosexual relations with boys to intercourse with women, for not only are these considered physically more satisfying, but they are also credited with an element of friendship, whereas men and women are thought incapable of developing true amity. Husbands take pride in beating their wives regularly, and only if bones are broken is a woman allowed to flee to her family, though even then she must ultimately return to her husband. For divorce is not tolerated except among the very poor, and to refer to a man as "divorced" is a deadly insult, because it implies his failure to have exerted his absolute dominance over his wife. The provision for divorce in Islamic law is ignored, as are the rules of Islamic law regarding the inheritance of property.

The landed gentry insist on the most stringent seclusion of women, and

there are stories of husbands killing their wives on account of even an inadvertent breach of purdah, actions which are consistent with the Pukhtun proverb, "Women belong in the house or in the grave". Among the poorer classes women have slightly more freedom, and whereas the seduction of an upper-class woman leads to death for both parties in the affair, the seduction of a lower-class woman may be ignored or punished merely by a fine. Despite the general denigration of women, expressed in a plethora of proverbs, wealthy men strive to have as many wives as possible, not so much for the sake of sexual gratification, but as symbols of success in the competition for every sort of chattel. Indeed, men of the elite "view the taking of women as an aspect of their hobby of warfare and one-upmanship".

The underlying aggressiveness in interpersonal relations so characteristic of Pukhtun pervades also the attitude towards kinsmen. There is probably the only community in South Asia in which members of the same lineage do not necessarily support each other, and feuds between patrilineal cousins result in gun-fights and deaths. Such disputes are not only over land, but concern also dominance and power. Often they lead to the utter destruction of both parties, for blood demands blood, and once it has been shed, the "game" of revenge killings has to be played to its bitter conclusion. In the days of British rule in India the Pathan tribes were often admired for their martial qualities, and there can be no doubt about the courage and endurance they evinced in the pursuit of tribal feuds. The proverb "The Pukhtun is never at peace, except when he is at war" illustrates this trend towards violence, but the inside view provided by Lindholm's micro-study of the Pukhtun suggests that the blind pursuit of honour and dominance imposes an intolerable strain on human

relations, and in the long run deprives all members of society of any prospect of individual happiness. For if it is true that within the Swat social order "all relationships contain elements of hostility or contempt, or both", neither the domineering men nor the despised and bullied women are likely to attain any fulfilment of their individual aspirations.

Denied the warmth of affection prevailing in other societies between husbands and wives, and often also between siblings and other close relatives, the Pukhtun seem to lead their lives in an atmosphere of continuous anxiety and struggle. Rivalry and jealousy are described as the normal state of affairs within the house, and children are taught how to survive in a hostile world. Siblings betray each other and are rewarded by being allowed to participate in beating the miscreant. Survival is for the fittest, and enmity within the family is exacerbated by the blatant favouritism of the parents. Many a son believes that he is hated by his father, and the author states quite bluntly that "mothers and sons have a common enemy in the husband/father; the mother is an outsider in her husband's house, while the sons are the father's rivals for his land". Though the harshness meted out to children may be a suitable preparation for the severity of Pukhtun reality, it also smothered any tentative search for amicable relations with contemporaries and thus lays the foundation for the unrelenting rivalry between kinsmen.

In view of the endemic tensions even within nuclear families it is hardly surprising that acts of aggression are not impeded by ties of blood. Squabbles between brothers over land may lead to fratricide, and killings of fathers and sons by each other are even more frequent. As the killer in such cases is also the murdered man's closest relative, the community as a

whole refrains from any action for among Pukhtun revenge is usually the only form of sanction, and this can be imposed by anyone outside the circle of the victim's agnates.

Warfare being traditionally the prime occupation of Pukhtun, a large part of the book is devoted to the discussion of fights between villages and districts, though these have largely to the past. Fatalities in such wars could be quite high, but the rewards of war seem to have been primarily in the realm of revenge. Though there was some pillaging of fields of defeated villages, home were never ransacked, successful warriors did not intend to hold on to their conquests, and neither land nor property was permanently confiscated. It was only in wars between rival territories caused devastation, death and hunger.

Anthropologists will appreciate the author's perceptive comparison between the Pukhtun lineage-system and that of other societies built on an infrastructure of segmentary lineage. The non-specialist reader, on the other hand, is likely to be fascinated by the vivid if somewhat lurid picture of a society which Lindholm graphically describes as "characterized by deceit, envy, acquisitiveness, expressed in entrepreneurship, hoarding, bribery, violence, conformity, and the model of being ashamed, and finally arrogance, which reveals itself in proud domination over the weak, and in a stance of total independence and egotism".

Numerous illustrations scattered throughout the text help the reader to visualize the Pukhtun and their environment, and the vividness of some of the informal pictures speaks for the author's skill in catching Pukhtun, both men and women, off their guard.

There is also a devastating account of the condition of the only sizeable ethnic minority in Japan - the Koreans (c. 700,000). In spite of the fact that most of the Koreans in Japan are there as a result of Japan's invasion of Korea (many of them are children of those forcibly brought over prior to 1945), Japan has discriminated severely against them over passports, questions of nationality, residence rights and employment.

Japan's record in this field shows up in its response to the two great catastrophes of the century: the 1923 earthquake and the atom bombs. After the first, there were huge pogroms, in which an unknown number of *burakumin*, many thousands of Koreans and about 600 Chinese were killed. After the second, the government declined to count Koreans or *burakumin* in the official total of deaths. A similar heartlessness, barely distinguishable from racism, can be seen in the current government's attitude to refugees.

Hane's book does not explicitly confront questions such as what lies behind Japan's restricted ability to communicate with and respect other peoples and cultures. Yet these vital issues, *Peasants, Rebels and Outcasts* is more help than most books on Japanese foreign policy and international trade. Above all, Hane's book and the moving testimony in it remind us that the rhetoric of "benevolence" and "harmony" usually masks cruelty and heartlessness. In these pages we meet "ordinary" Japanese who are truly extraordinary made great by courage in the face of overwhelming adversity.

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## Hemisphere of influence

Laurence Whitehead

A. A. HUMPHREYS

*Latin America and the Second World War: Volume Two 1942-1945*  
266pp. Athlone. £18.  
0 485 17711 0

When President Roosevelt was elected for a third term in November 1940, he received many letters of congratulation, not all of which he answered. One which was answered for him came from a teenage student at a Jesuit College in Santiago de Cuba. "My good friend Roosevelt," it began, "I like to hear the radio and I am very happy because I heard in it you will be President for a year. I am a ten dollars bill green note, because never I have not seen a ten dollars bill green American, and I would like to have one of them", and in exchange "if you want iron to make your ships I will show you the big (minas) of iron of the land".

According to the National Archives of the USA which released this document a few years ago the President's young correspondent, (who signed himself Fidel Castro), received a letter of acknowledgment from the US Ambassador to Cuba, but no thanks. Without passing judgment on the authenticity of this exchange, it summarizes in miniature several aspects of the Second World War as viewed from Latin America. Or, as the leading Latin American diplomat observed to the State Department in 1948, "We support your cause, and we thank you for your shelter, but as your own blossoms we become afraid".

R. H. Humphreys does not quote either of these sources, but his abundant documentation portrays the material circumstances in which such attitudes developed. With war mobilization the US became a market for strategic raw materials from the south, but shipping was available only for priority goods, although credits could be provided for collective defence (Lend-Lease) and to promote certain types of development. For example, in return for pledging its wartime output to the US for the construction of Liberty ships Mexico received a second-hand steel-mill, a centre-piece of subsequent

industrialization. More generally, the Pentagon established privileged links with the military establishments of almost all Latin American republics, and those Latin American republics which had served the interests of US foreign policy ever since. However, the US was far more important to Latin America than the US. Wartime realignments healed some old feuds and enabled Washington to forge some new alliances with selected elements within the southern republics. But the benefits were of necessity unevenly distributed, and any southern groups that stood in the way of the new wartime strategy were liable to be trampled underfoot. Many more like the young Castro, were destined for the role of hopeful but ineffectual bystanders.

The second volume of Professor Humphreys's history traces this intricate pattern from 1942-45. (Volume one was reviewed in the TLS on June 18, 1982). The dividing line between the two volumes turns out to be fairly artificial. One could say that Humphreys provides twenty different histories, from thumbnail sketches of the smaller Caribbean republics to in-depth coverage of Mexico, Brazil, and above all Argentina. The first two of this trio were the major beneficiaries of the new situation created by the war, and both secured for themselves a priority of influence in the US-dominated postwar order by committing troops to the Allied cause. A token 300 Mexicans fought in the Philippines. More significantly, over 25,000 Brazilians participated in the liberation of Italy. Humphreys records that this latter commitment was almost, but not quite, enough to earn Brazil a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Not coincidentally perhaps, over two thirds of all Lend-Lease funds going to Latin America were received by Brazil. In general, those republics (like Mexico) facing the Pacific saw the war above all as a conflict with Japan, whereas those exposed to German submarines in the Atlantic saw the European theatre as their main concern. Only Chile and Argentina tried holding out for neutrality. Finally, in January 1943 even Chile belatedly joined the Allies - and was rewarded with a Lend-Lease agreement. The historic loser, therefore, was Argentina.

The clash between Argentina and the Allied powers provides a fitting climax to this two-volume history. Humphreys plays down Anglo-

American rivalries before 1944, in contrast to many Argentine historians, who present London as a quietly benevolent towards a neutral Argentina that was after all resisting American expansionism and channelling its food surplus towards a tightly rationed Britain. Argentine perceptions of Britain were heavily filtered through the Anglo-Argentine community and its City of London lobbyists, but Humphreys classes these as peripheral influences in British policy. He stresses that Eden and the Foreign Office were concerned to maintain a united front with the Americans and to prosecute the war at any cost. Even so, when in 1943 it came to applying pressure on the recalcitrant Argentine government, the Foreign Office was happy to let the US "do the running". However, Humphreys's account makes clear that there were severe Anglo-American tensions below the surface and that on this issue there were also deep divisions within the American administration.

To summarize a complex story, Secretary of State Hull pursued such an exaggerated vendetta against the "pro-Nazi" Argentine military government that he played into the hands of Peron. Britain, dependent on Argentina for 40 per cent of her meat imports, felt severely threatened by this policy over which she had no control. As Churchill put it to Roosevelt in July 1944, "You would not send your soldiers into battle on the British Service meat ration, which is far above what is given to workmen. Your people are eating per head more meat and poultry than before the war while ours are most sharply cut." Furthermore the British Ambassador in Buenos Aires could not accept Hull's view that Argentina was a fully-fledged fascist state, and the headquarters of the fascist movement in the Western hemisphere. He regarded it simply as a military dictatorship with totalitarian ideas. But so, he thought, was the Brazilian Government, which Roosevelt was aiding to the disadvantage of Argentina. In retrospect this judgment looks irrefutable. From a doctrinal viewpoint the differences between Vargas in Brazil and Peron were hardly more than questions of nuance.

In contrast to this Foreign Office scepticism some (though not all) influential figures in the US administration - including the intelligence services - took a most alarmist view of Nazi influence. Indeed Humphreys indicates that in the

autumn of 1943 the State Department toyed with the idea of "covert action" to overthrow the precariously balanced new military government. Eventually on that occasion the Americans settled for a public rebuke (which undercut the influence of pro-Allied elements within the Argentine military establishment), backed by a refusal to supply arms as long as Argentina was unwilling to cooperate over hemispheric security. Of course the arming of Brazil and not Argentina created a regional imbalance that the Germans were in no position to correct. Evidently Secretary of State Hull supposed that by following this course the US would create the conditions for a pro-Allied and democratic upsurge within Argentina. In fact such efforts were counterproductive, as the British - critically dependent on Argentine supplies - were quick to observe. When the US reduced oil shipments to Buenos Aires, the Argentine government responded by burning grain to fuel their factories. The food supplies they incinerated would have supported two million people for one year, at a time when Allied stocks of food were desperately scarce. Politically too Argentine nationalists still had a last card to play. Siege conditions facilitated the rise to power of Colonel Peron, and the creation of a political movement that has mesmerized and divided Argentina ever since.

Hull's inflexibility foreshadowed many subsequent episodes of American intransigence toward Latin American governments that would have been better handled by routine diplomacy. Today, for example, it seems a remarkable self-deception for a nation that for half a century condoned the methods used by the Somozas to invoke moral arguments against the Nicaraguan government. In practical terms, the campaign against the Sandinistas seems liable to But so, he thought, was the Brazilian Government, which Roosevelt was aiding to the disadvantage of Argentina. In retrospect this judgment looks irrefutable. From a doctrinal viewpoint the differences between Vargas in Brazil and Peron were hardly more than questions of nuance.

Humphreys writes an incisive narrative, and he uses the British and American diplomatic records, supplemented from the Latin American press, to good effect. The international diplomacy (including the economic and military factors) is perceptively recorded, and the

distinctive features of each episode are shrewdly summarized.

Naturally his method of analysis also has its drawbacks. Thus, we learn what Vargas and Peron decided, but their rationales remain elusive. Humphreys does not, for example, use the insights of Felix Luna, who reconstructed the same process from the Argentine side. In 1945 Luna quotes Peron as follows: "We had stayed neutral but by February 1945 we could keep it up no longer. I remember meeting with some of my German friends, who were the leaders of their community, and saying to them, 'look here, we have no alternative but to declare war, because if we don't we will go to Nuremberg, and so will you'. So they all agreed, and we declared war, but of course it was purely formal."

Similarly, we learn how each republic was affected by the war, and how responses to it varied, but what the conflict really meant to Latin Americans remains obscure. In country after country Humphreys records that the approach of the Allied victory created almost irresistible pressures for "democratization", but the significance and limits of this process remain undiscussed.

Lastly, we observe the rise of US power and the displacement of its extra-continental rivals (including Britain) but the matter-of-factness of this account obscures what other possibilities were foreclosed, and so diminishes the real drama of the war. In the concluding chapter Humphreys comes close to endorsing the viewpoint of American revisionist historians. They have argued that postwar US hegemony in Latin America was a product not simply of Europe's prostration but of a systematic bias in Washington's policies against her "imperialist rivals". Indeed the very names of the American policymakers of this period are evocative of the most internationalist sector of American capitalism - Rockefeller, Braden, Armour - but the implications of these are not explored. Humphreys shies away from a direct verdict on the issues raised by the revisionists, or from an explicit embrace of the "dependency" perspective in Latin American analysis (although the word does appear twice on the penultimate page).

Nevertheless, in these two volumes Professor Humphreys has most successfully achieved what he set out to do.

## Rhetoric and reality

Jon Halliday

MIKISO HANE

*Peasants, Rebels and Outcasts: The Underside of Modern Japan*  
297pp. Scolar Press. £12.50.  
0 85967 670 6

Earlier this year the Japanese government got itself into a lot of trouble with its East-Asian neighbours over the latest official rewriting of history in Japan's authorized textbooks. The forcible drafting of Korean workers in the first half of this century became a "voluntary act", and the invasion of China in the 1930s an "advance". Japan's neighbours were both offended and worried. The deeds whitewashed were in the past, but the rewriting is in the present. Yet such disturbing events have not been enough to cause even a hiccup in the state of books extolling the "Japanese model", which emanate mostly from America, but which also receive a warm welcome in Japan. Rarely has the "model" literature sought to confront, much less to resolve, the contradiction between the indisputable violence and cruelty of Japan's expansion up until the mid-1940s and the purveyed image of a society, extolled as it well could by Confucian virtues such as "benevolence" and "harmony".

Mikiso Hane's *Peasants, Rebels and Outcasts* is a stimulating antidote, fresh in style and warm in feeling, to any complacency and self-righteousness about modern Japan which actually built a great strength of the book is a very well-chosen selection of extracts (often extensive) from earlier and oral history interviews with the author's narrative. These give the text a punch and directness often lacking in more conventional histories. The reader is brought close to the deep helplessness and suffering of these peasants, prostitutes and outcasts. Although much of the book concerns the period prior to 1945, it is precisely this historical material which allows the reader to understand the underlying

factors which still endure today. The picture presented will be a revelation even to many who have read widely in Japanese history.

The rather modest title hardly does justice to the ground covered. There is rich material on industrial workers as well as on peasants; the outcasts include, rightly, non-Japanese groups, especially Koreans, who have suffered severe discrimination in Japan and its empire. Above all, much of the book is devoted to the appalling status of women.

Michel Foucault has shown how a society reveals as much, or more, of itself by what it excludes as by what it includes. Hane's book reconstructs the history of modern Japan from accounts of both the excluded and the oppressed. It is vaguely known that the development of an industrialized Japan was accompanied by unsavoury features, such as militarism, chauvinism and the oppression of women. Here we can read the high costs of this type of success, as seen by those who paid for it.

Roughly half the book concerns the position of women. To an extent not always recognized, the construction of modern Japan was based on the use of women workers, not just in agriculture, but also in industry, where they worked in far worse conditions than men, on much lower pay, with no job security and minimal rights. It was discrimination against *burakumin* eased markedly in the postwar period.

Hane has excellent material on the most blatant form of oppression. Until quite recently, many families were selling their daughters into *de facto* slavery in brothels. Hane cites a source which states that the Japanese brought an estimated 30,000 prostitutes into Manchuria and in 1910 it was estimated that there were over 22,000 Japanese prostitutes abroad. Many of the most appalling acts of cruelty perpetrated by the Japanese abroad were connected with the employment of women. Thousands of Korean women were forcibly rounded up and hauled off to

brothels for the Japanese. During the Pacific War and the fighting in China many were taken right up into the trenches and many were killed in the front lines.

Japanese racism is both "internal" and "external". Hane devotes a chapter to the *burakumin*, the group of ethnic Japanese numbering somewhere between one and three million (probably nearer three million), but the Japanese will not count them, or state how many there are) who are ostracized from the mainstream of Japanese life, in spite of having gained formal equality as far back as 1871. Hane records that there were often covert *burakumin*-only platoons in the Imperial Army and that in at least one case the *burakumin* died for their names omitted from a memorial. Nor was discrimination against *burakumin* eased markedly in the postwar period.

Japan's record in this field shows up in its response to the two great catastrophes of the century: the 1923 earthquake and the atom bombs. After the first, there were huge pogroms, in which an unknown number of *burakumin*, many thousands of Koreans and about 600 Chinese were killed. After the second, the government declined to count Koreans or *burakumin* in the official total of deaths. A similar heartlessness, barely distinguishable from racism, can be seen in the current government's attitude to refugees.

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The books under review offer the first highly critical accounts of the operation, though in contrasting fashions. Schlesinger and Kinzer present a popularized, journalistic version, using standard devices - dramatic flashbacks, colourful details, alleged quotes from conversations - to argue that PBSUCCESS was an example of old-fashioned economic imperialism, intended to benefit the powerful United Fruit Company. Immerman's more thoughtful, scholarly book is no less critical, but richer in documentation and insight, more concerned with the atmosphere of the Cold War and its ramifications.

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T. S. Eliot  
and Roger Vittoz

Sir, - I do not usually challenge reviewers, but David Trotter's recent review of my book *Stiff and Dreams* (November 19) raises a question relating to evidence in biographical writing which seems to me to require more clarification than he offers. He speaks of my using "gossip" in my account of T. S. Eliot's journey to Lausanne for treatment by Dr Roger Vittoz, a psychiatrist, during the writing of *The Waste Land*. Specifically he refers to my quoting Lady Ottoline Morrell's account of her treatment by Vittoz and quotes, it seems to me in a deprecatory way, her testimony which I used. Julian Huxley had referred Eliot to Vittoz; Aldous Huxley was familiar with the psychiatrist's experimental methods. I also drew on a scientific paper discussing Vittoz's work by the Chicago psychoanalyst, Dr Harry Trosman, which is sourced in my notes. I would maintain that any definition of evidence that is not "gossip" but solid testimony given by credible witnesses who had either worked face to face with Vittoz or studied his philosophy of mental therapy, I did not argue that Eliot received the same treatment as Lady Ottoline, but suggested this was a kind of treatment Vittoz used and we know that whatever the treatment, it was helpful to the poet.

"Gossip" is another matter altogether, as I hope my reviewer will recognize. It can on occasion be useful in "literary psychology" if properly analysed and sourced. I feel that my reviewer's use of it is pejorative.

LEON EDEL,  
3817 Lurline Drive, Honolulu,  
Hawaii 96816.

Alexander  
Pasternak

Sir, - I am delighted to see Patricia Blake acknowledging (Letters, December 3) that her description in *Time* Magazine of Alexander Pasternak as a Soviet secret policeman was merely an infelicitous reference to his employment by the NKVD as an architect. This welcome admission goes far towards correcting the totally different and unfounded picture presented in her review of the Pasternak-Freidenberg correspondence.

One small matter of vocabulary still needs tidying up. Patricia Blake continues to attach a residue of unwarranted significance to Olga Freidenberg's description of Alexander's uniform as "military-Chekist". Unlike the simple term "Chekist" (which Mr Blake quite rightly says has continued in conversational use to signify the security police), this byphenated compound adjective neither is nor was part of ordinary Russian parlance. It

was evidently cobbled together by Freidenberg to describe the unhappy blend of associations conjured up by Alexander's uniform. If Patricia Blake needs further reassurance on this point, there is no shortage of linguistic authorities in New York City whom she can consult.

PETER OPPENHEIMER,  
Christ Church, Oxford.

## George Orwell

Sir, - Richard Mayne in his review of *George Orwell* by T. R. Fyfe (November 26) tells us that Orwell "abhorred and attacked" the accusing of political opponents of being "objectively Fascist". Certainly Orwell was disinterested in being himself labelled pro-Fascist for his anti-Stalinist activity in the Spanish Civil War, but that didn't stop him labelling pacifists in the same way: probably it gave him the idea. "Objectively the pacifist is pro-Nazi" he wrote in 1941. He later came to view this kind of statement as misleadingly simplistic, but it should be recognized as a phase of his thinking.

Not so long ago I heard John Nott deride someone for "talking doubletalk like in Orwell's *Animal Farm*" - but even so, Richard Mayne's judgment that "the best known line from *Nineteen Eighty-Four*" is "All animals are equal but some are more equal than others" took me by surprise.

JOHN THOMPSON,  
Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

## Venetia Stanley

Sir, - As one having enjoyed for a decade the friendship of Mrs Edwin Montagu and for nearly half a century that of Lady Diana Cooper, I was greatly surprised to see, in Stephen Koss's incisive review (November 26) of H. H. Asquith's *Letters to Venetia Stanley*, edited by Michael and Eleanor Brock, the claim repeated that "Diana Cooper, naturally assumed that Venetia had been Asquith's mistress" (I note, in passing, that A. J. P. Taylor has now begun to assume this too.) The Brocks refer, in a footnote, to a passage in Philip Ziegler's *Diana Cooper*, where Lady Diana has clearly been misunderstood and misreported. She certainly never suspected such a thing of Asquith and Venetia at a time, and the subsequent highly circumstantial account the latter gave her of the disagreeably brutal defecation to which she was subjected by her husband on her wedding night could scarcely have caused her to revise her opinion.

ALASTAIR FORBES,  
1837 Chateau d'Oex, Vaud,  
Switzerland.

Sir, - In his review (November 26) of Michael and Eleanor Brock's edition of Asquith's letters to Venetia Stanley, Stephen Koss writes that "Cameron Hazlehurst consulted these letters among the Montagu papers and used

them, apparently without restriction, in his book *Politicians at War*, 1971".

As the Brocks make no reference to my use of the letters in their otherwise comprehensive discussion of the publishing history of the correspondence, it may prevent some unnecessary puzzlement if I explain the relevant circumstances.

While working with Randolph Churchill in 1967 and 1968 I was able to consult an incomplete set of transcripts in his possession. Subsequently, by courtesy of the late Judy Gendel, a complete set of his working transcripts was made available to me. With the kind consent of Mrs Gendel and Mark Bonham Carter, I made use of the letters in writing my political history of the period, July 1914 to May 1915. However, in deference to Mrs Gendel and Mr Bonham Carter, who were planning an edition of the letters, I quoted very sparingly from them.

For the record, it should also be noted that Martin Gilbert enjoyed the same privilege when writing Volume Three of the life of Sir Winston Churchill. Gilbert did not have to rely, as Stephen Koss's account implies, on the incomplete transcripts obtained by Randolph Churchill.

CAMERON HAZLEHURST,  
Research School of Social Sciences,  
Australian National University,  
Canberra, Australia.

## "Tasks and Masks"

Sir, - The dismissal by Lewis Nkosi (Letters, November 26) of Dennis Walder's suggestion in his review of Nkosi's *Tasks and Masks* (August 27) not, however, developed in his own letter of December 10 - that there was something discreditable in Es'kia Mphahlele's taking a South African university post is to be welcomed. The point is that the university is Witwatersrand, which even more than the other "English" universities in South Africa maintains and promotes, as far as the law allows, the equal rights of South Africans of all races. For their part opposition to apartheid the staff of that - and the other universities where the same line is taken - deserve the support of university teachers in this country. For one thing they can, and generally do, ignore the boycott of South African universities and academics which is the misguided policy of the Association of University Teachers.

JOHN GILLARD WATSON,  
32a Beach Croft Road, Oxford.

## Palindromes

Sir, - There is one possible basis of classification which no recent correspondent has mentioned: some palindromes have an even number of letters, with the letters of the last half repeating the letters of the first half in reverse order (like the one-word palindromes "noon" and "deed"), and others have an odd number of letters, with a pivot letter occurring once in the middle (like the one-word palindromes "tenet" and "madam").

Another significant fact about palindromes is that it is hard to say in what sense anyone can be called the author of one. (Hence I prefer to say finder rather than author.) For instance, I happen to have stumbled on two myself ("Slang is signals", even-numbered, and "A toy, O Toyotai", odd-numbered), about which I can only wonder how many dozens of persons may have stumbled on them before me. By analogy, this makes one wonder about the nature of poetry composed according to definite patterns of metre or rhyme or both: all the materials for the line "O lente, lente currite, noctis equi" or the line "To borrow through the vast and boundless deep" were lying there latent in the Latin or the English language before Ovid or Milton put them together in a certain way. Someone else might in each case have done so, but, as far as we know, did not.

In palindromes the compulsion exercised by the language on the writer reaches deeper and governs minutely details, with at least two results: first, palindromes can be found which have little or no meaning, others can be found which have some vague hint of meaning, and still others which have a rather clear meaning; second, a palindromic word, a phrase or a sentence, meaning makes a statement with which its finder may or may not agree. Thus I happen to think that the use of slang does signal an attitude, but would not seriously maintain that a Toyota is a toy. One of the most significant palindromes I know, "A man, a plan, a canal: Panama", attributed (I do not know with what authority) to James Thurber, sounds like high praise of Theodore Roosevelt, but I do not know whether Thurber admired Roosevelt or not.

I leave it to others to reflect individually on the extent to which this feature of palindromes, may also furnish a helpful analogy to the process of poetic composition.

Finally, in the sentence, "That style is a further manifestation of the Raymond Williams - Terry Eagleton blend of porridge and sawdust", I would much prefer the original spelling "porage" - which seems to me to adumbrate a more glutinous stodge; and "sawdust" is written as a compound, "saw-dust", it is more effectively charged with the combination of dryness, cheapness and proletarian sympathy (cf "split and saw-dust") which Michael Tanner's argument requires.

GRAHAM HOLDERNESSE,  
Department of Adult Education,  
University College of Swansea, Up-  
lands, Swansea.

## D. H. Lawrence

Sir, - May I make one or two small corrections to Michael Tanner's stimulating review (November 26) of my *D. H. Lawrence: History, Ideology and Fiction*? In the quoted sentence, "Lawrence himself, as a child and as a young man, lived in a actual historical community, which was a complex totality", the last word should of course read "totally" - which makes the sentence more like earnestness than a bulletin from the Pentagon. The phrase "waterly Marxism" should, I feel, omit the upper case initial letter: "marxism" would seem more appropriate to describe this diluted philosophy, to distinguish it from the neat, unadulterated brand Tanner prefers.

CHARLES R. SLEIGHT,  
Department of English, Brooklyn  
College, City University of New York,  
Brooklyn, New York 11210.

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GRAHAM HOLDERNESSE,  
Department of Adult Education,  
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## Among this week's contributors

- FLEUR ADCOCK's most recent collection of poems, *The Inner Harbour*, was published in 1979.
- NICOLAS BARKER is Head of Conservation at the British Library.
- JOHN BEEB's books include *Coleridge's Poetic Intelligence*, 1977.
- JULIA BRIGGS's *This Stage-Play World: English Literature and its Background 1580-1625* will be published in 1983.
- ANTA BROOKNER's books include *Jacques-Louis David*, 1980; Her new novel, *Look At Me*, will be published early next year.
- ROBERT CONQUEST's books include *Stalin: The Arctic Death Camps*, 1978, and *Forays*, 1979.
- JIM CRACE's collection of stories *Content* will be published early next year.
- APRIL FITZLYON's biography of Pauline Viardot, *The Price of Genius*, was published in 1964.
- CHRISTOPH VON FÜRER-HAMENDORF is Professor of Anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. His books include *A Himalayan Tribe*, 1980.
- BARBARA GOODWIN is co-author with Keith Taylor of *The Politics of Utopia*, which will be reviewed in a future issue of the TLS.
- DONALD GOULD was formerly editor of *New Scientist*.
- JOHN HALLIDAY is the author of *A Political History of Japanese Capitalism*, 1975.
- HAROLD HOBSON is an Honorary Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford.
- PETER HOWELL is the author of *A Commentary on Book One of the Epigrams of Martial*, 1980.
- JULIE KAVANAGH reviews editor of *Harpers and Queen*.
- B. J. KEMP is a lecturer in Egyptology at the University of Cambridge.
- PETER KEMP's *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Age* will be reviewed in a future issue of the TLS.
- HUGH KENNER's *A Colder Eye*, an account of the Irish Revival, will be published next year.
- RUDOLF KLEIN is Professor of Social Policy at the University of Bath.
- COLIN LUCAS is the author of *The Structure of the Terror*, 1973.
- D. F. MACKENZIE is President of the Bibliographical Society.
- CHARLES MARTINDALE is the editor of a book on Virgil's influence which will be published in 1983.
- WILFRID MELLERS's recent books include *Back and the Dance of God*, 1980.
- BLAKE MORRISON's *Seamus Heaney* was published earlier this year.
- JOHN ROSSSELL's *Lord William Bampfylde: The Making of a Liberal Imperialist: 1774-1839* was published in 1974.
- CHARLES RYECROFT's books include *Religion and The Innocence of Dreams*, 1979.
- ANTHONY STORER's *The Art of Psychotherapy* was published in 1979.
- MICHAEL TANNER is a lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Cambridge.
- CRISPIN TICKELL was recently a Visiting Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, and is at present HM Ambassador in Mexico.
- STANLEY WELLS is General Editor of the Oxford Shakespeare.
- LAURENCE WHITEHEAD is a Fellow in Politics at Nuffield College, Oxford.

Winner of the Wolfson  
Literary Award  
for History 1982

## John McManners

## Death and the Enlightenment

## Changing Attitudes to Death among Christians and Unbelievers in Eighteenth-Century France

Professor McManners is one of those rare historians who still believe that the history of religion should be about religion... compassionate, beautifully written and deeply learned study. Richard Cobb in *The Guardian*.

It is rare to find a writer equally at home in religion and history. This book is essential for understanding modern France - and indeed modern tensions between humanism and Christianity in the truly Christian society, his book would provoke deep discussion. *The Tablet*, 21.7.80.

Oxford University Press

## BIOGRAPHY

PETER RABY  
Folk Ophelia: A life of Harriet  
Smithson Berlioz  
216pp, Cambridge University Press.  
£12.95.  
0521 24421 8

The career, the glory, the decline of Harriet Smithson might be subtitled "the saddest story ever told". It is also a story which comprises several others, because in the course of its unfolding it touches upon many curious matters: the launching of a new literary fashion, the exploration of various sources of behaviour, the nature of Romantic

and the extraordinary destiny of Hector Berlioz. The marriage of Berlioz and Miss Smithson was, as it were, the aftermath, the mere resolution, of the most prolonged and public courtship in Paris. At times these two tragedians seem to be vying with each other in hurt and pity, Ophelia dazzling Hamlet until, relentlessly, Hamlet moves upstage, centre stage, and indeed never off stage, and Ophelia dies, not mad, but very gravely diminished, addicted to beauty, and eventually speechless and paralysed. There is even a graveyard scene, played at the Cimetière Montmartre, where the horrified Berlioz watches the headless but still shrouded corpse of his wife removed from its coffin, en route to a more permanent resting place. Shakespeare would not have gone so far, but Berlioz courted death.

Harriet Smithson was, by all accounts, modest and virtuous. Remove, which generally gets it wrong about vice, is on the whole reliable when it comes to virtue, or, at least, absence of scandal, and it was marked of her, very early on in the history of her public appearances, "She is like a lady and looks like an angel". She was born in Ennis, in the west of Ireland, in 1800, and seems to have been unfortunate in her family. Her father was a perpetually theatrical manager, in whose footsteps she was bound to follow; her brother vanished at an early stage, probably to America; her sister was an invalid with a malicious temper; and her mother was a financially poor actress who gave the odd performance but who was, and was to remain, financially dependent on the acting fortunes of her elder daughter. From this primal mess Harriet Smithson emerges as a dream, rather passive girl who obediently attempted the only official career open to a woman of her times; her early biography is a list of minor engagements in Dublin and London and in various theatres in the provinces. At this stage of her development she does not appear to have been particularly gifted; her Irish accent and poor enunciation were always something of a drawback and as she was usually cast as the ingénue she could find little in her roles with which to identify. But she was charming to look at, refused to bargain for theatrical favours, and bore with uncomplicated fortitude the occasional shower of orange peel from the pit.

This Miss Smithson was of a deeply, men dangerously, melancholy nature, and she was of an opportunity to play Ophelia, Juliet, and Desdemona at the Théâtre de l'Odéon in Paris, where her quiet, drawing-room was of no importance to a largely English-speaking audience but she was increasingly demonic in her performance, waving through a house of shouting many of the most notable and gifted writers, painters and poets. It is estimated that her first performance was attended by Hugo, Vigny, Alphonse Karr, Delacroix, Eugène Delacroix, Sainte-Beuve, Gautier, and Philibert Chéreau, and that these were joined on subsequent evenings by Jules Janin, by the wildly comic by Berlioz, who sustained his coup de foudre on September 15, 1827, and who was to be observed, when not in the audience, either pacing the stage and dressed in fashion in the

reconstruct theatrical performance but the occasion of the first night of *Hamlet* in Paris, on September 11, 1827, must have been very extraordinary. Used to the noble, static and essentially aristocratic declamation of French classical theatre, which dictated the necessity of restricting action, duration, and peripeteia, and in which the obligation to remain in character was paramount, the audience was in for a series of shocks. In the Mousetrap scene, Hamlet (Charles Kemble) sprawled on the floor, propped on one elbow and leaning against Ophelia - and this was not the demure thought to be within the terms of reference of a prince. Worse, he played with Ophelia's fan while other actors were speaking their lines, and eventually slithered across the stage to Gertrude and Claudius, "dérrière en l'air". The restlessness and dismay which this occasioned in the audience were still and converted into amazement when Miss Smithson, as Ophelia, entered, with wisps of straw in her hair. Put on her mettle perhaps, by the murmurs of the audience, she sobbed, she sighed, she seemed transfixed: a contemporary lithograph

Indicates that she might have been operating in the top-eyed and unfocused tradition of Garrick, but the evidence of other contemporary material shows that she used her long, pliant, and lightly clad body to very great effect, leaning and bending in an unusually graphic expression of despair or collapsing helplessly at the feet of Gertrude. Her first exit ("Good night, ladies!" occasioned utter silence, followed by a storm of cheering. Miss Smithson, unused to such a reception and unable to understand French, turned to a member of the company and asked, "My God, what are they saying? Do they like it - or hate it?" They liked it. As she re-entered and started strutting her flowers, strong men were heard to sob. The impression was so indelible that the entire fifth act was judged to be an anticlimax. For the first, and possibly the last, time in theatrical history, Ophelia had upstaged Hamlet.

It is at this point that the story begins to diverge. The purely linear account of Miss Smithson's triumph, which can be judged at the lowest possible level by the rapid appearance of a new coiffure - *à la folle* - incorporating wisps of straw, can be projected and prolonged for a couple of years when she continued to appear as Ophelia, as

## Anita Brookner

Juliet, as Desdemona, and as Jane Shore - to increasingly adoring audiences. There are indications that she was overshadowed in March 1828 when she was partnered by Macready as Othello. Macready was a ruthless actor, not averse to padding round the stage and muttering to himself when lines other than his own were being spoken; nevertheless his twenty-minute ovation as Othello marks the apogee of the Shakespearean moment in France, and the vindication of Stendhal's call for a modern dramatic form - a call which is in itself perhaps the most pungent of all Romantic attacks on thinking replication of classical formulas, and which launched a whole series of hybrid French tragedies, abounding in costume changes, exotic locations, and actions of questionable nobility, of which the best example is Hugo's *Hernani*. And from this the story opens out even further, for the most intoxicated admirer of Shakespeare was Berlioz, and Miss Smithson on herself he decided to create a work as large, as all-encompassing, and as organic as that of Shakespeare. It is in this desire that we

but inevitably increasing in intensity and expanding in its application. When allied to the creative impulse, this feeling can be, quite literally, limitless: Berlioz's competition with Shakespeare for the privilege of engaging Miss Smithson's attention may have led further than even he was able to anticipate. Certainly some of his states of mind were far from normal, but it is equally clear that some of them were so quintessentially normal that they require to be restated. It is occasionally appropriate to have exalted expectations, whether or not these are to be fulfilled. Berlioz even recognizes his own despair as being a positive, and activating force, for this despair is in part fury at gratification withheld. Describing his attacks of spleen, he writes, in his *Mémoires*:

On n'a pas idées de mort dans ces crises; non, la pensée du suicide n'est pas même supportable; on ne veut pas mourir, loin de là, on veut vivre, on le veut absolument, on voudrait même donner à sa vie mille fois plus d'énergie; c'est une aptitude prodigieuse au bonheur, qui s'exaspère de rester sans application, et qui ne

own company. This she could easily have done and indeed she made some attempts to do so, but she failed to secure a theatre and did not understand that she needed a manager. She took no account of changing literary fashions in France and went on trying to revive her early success three years after the first night of *Hernani* and the *Preface to Cromwell*, after the adaptation and vulgarization of Shakespearean dramatic form for French audiences. She was hapless and essentially innocent; she was also in her thirties and putting on a good deal of weight. She was still terrified by the possibility that the extravagant Berlioz, whose behaviour she narrowly deduced to be that of an epileptic, might continue to pester her with his attentions, and refused even to receive a note he sent her.

Berlioz misinterpreted her alarm as disdain and declined into a temporary lassitude. He describes how he lay on his bed one day until three in the afternoon, and how, when he eventually dragged himself to his window, it was to see Miss Smithson getting into her carriage and driving away. She was off to Amsterdam. He then redirected his attention to the *Symphonie Fantastique*, and it is at this point that their respective fortunes begin to undergo a change. Although still in the grip of his *idée fixe*, Berlioz allowed himself to be diverted by another lady, Camille Moke. Also, crossing the courtyard of the Palais Royal during the hectic July Days of 1830, he heard a group of young men singing the *Chant Guerrier*, one of his arrangements of Moore's *Irish Melodies*. He joined in, and then conducted them in a fairly tumultuous rendering of the *Marseillaise*. This he too had his taste of theatrical triumph. Shortly afterwards, he was awarded the Prix de Rome for his cantata *Sardanapalus*, and set off for Rome, with his marriage to Camille Moke arranged for Easter 1832. He was to make a precipitate dash to Paris earlier than expected, when Mme Moke wrote to him that her daughter had arranged to marry M. Pleyel instead, but after a possible suicide attempt he was persuaded to return to Italy. He arrived back in Paris in November 1832, by which time Miss Smithson, after a series of failed or botched engagements, had a poor reception in *Jane Shore* at the Théâtre Italien. In December of the same year Berlioz gave a concert at the Conservatoire consisting of the *Symphonie Fantastique* and *Lélio*, the link passages of which were declaimed by the actor Bocage. A box was obtained by an English journalist who persuaded the doleful Miss Smithson to join him. In a theatre attended by Liszt, Chopin, Paganini, Hugo, Dumas, Vigny, George Sand, Haime, and Gautier, Berlioz, through his music, proclaimed to the world his passion for the woman he was later to call "poor Ophelia". No one, not even Miss Smithson, could claim to misinterpret his feelings. It was five years since his first sighting of her and they had still not exchanged a word. But it was after her public acknowledgment of the love, on this occasion, that the relationship could become translated into realistic terms.

He wished to marry her, but till she hesitated. Her family was against it, and, more specifically so was his. She was easily discouraged, she was older than he was and knew very little about France and the French; she had never come to terms with the language. And she still believed that she could repeat her early successes, although all the recent evidence was against this. Her disappointment activated a morbidly, a propensity to disaster which had perhaps been there all along and which had been exacerbated by her all too graphic enactment of grief and despair. Paradoxically, her exploration of the depths of her feelings in character had made her unwilling to tolerate such feelings in real life. Except on the stage, no further emotional advance was possible for her; and, as her life was to show, the rest was all retreat.

In March, 1833, she fell and broke her leg in two places. It took a long time to mend and she was immobile for several months. Her worries about



Harriet Smithson on her last legs and off them. Left, Charles Kemble as Romeo clutches Harriet as she heaven-bound Juliet, while, below right, in a less supportive role, he is about to put out her light in Othello. Top right, she is shown as the reclining and declining Jane Shore in Rowe's tragedy about Edward IV's mistress. The illustrations are from the book reviewed here.

can locate the germ of the *Symphonie Fantastique* and in particular of *Lélio*, but, more important, it is in this desire that we can recognize and understand Berlioz's unrelenting, huge, ambition, of output, and, of course, of behaviour. If Shakespeare was an enabling factor for Berlioz, Shakespeare was to be the undoing of Miss Smithson, for she was not naturally endowed with the Romantic temperament. She was, in fact, dependent, modest, hesitant, and much played upon by the demands of her conscience, or rather the demands planted there by her mother and sister. Berlioz, who possessed the Romantic temperament to its ultimate degree, a degree perhaps not experienced, and certainly not expressed, by any of his contemporaries, gives the impression of being able to pass through fire and water unscathed.

This temperament has nothing to do with the dying fall of melancholy sometimes thought to be emblematic of Romantic feeling, but it is, in fact, compounded of envy, of appetite, and of an insatiable desire to make the world take note. It may even be a kind of conversion hysteria, set in train by a specific circumstance, ie Berlioz's passion for Miss Smithson, to whom he had as yet not addressed a single word,

peut se satisfaire qu'au moyen de jouissances immenses, dévorantes, furieuses, en rapport avec l'incalculable surabondance de ses ambitions. It is perhaps this "aptitude prodigieuse au bonheur", feeding upon itself and rarely recompensed, that is responsible for the great creative acts of the Romantic movement. What is less carefully and redemptively called "ambition" is in fact a much more profound expression of an appetite larger than the norm. To possess the appetite alone is not enough; its possession must be convincingly and consistently demonstrated. Those who cannot fulfil this obligation are the casualties of Romanticism; for it is not a career open to all the talents. The story of Berlioz and Miss Smithson illustrates the fitness of the one and the unfitness of the other for such an enterprise.

For Miss Smithson had no immortal longings in her. She was a good woman, understandably pleased with her hard-earned popularity, but neither philosophical enough to mistrust it, nor hard-headed enough to establish her position by forming her











## No false gods

B. J. Kemp

A. ROSALIE DAVID

*The Ancient Egyptians: Religious Beliefs and Practices*  
260pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.  
£9.95 (paperback, £5.95).  
0 7100 0877 5

Anyone who writes about Christianity or Islam faces a subject defined by the existence of active believers who have been anxious to create definitions of their own. Ancient Egyptian religion, however, belongs to an earlier stage of human consciousness. Under the heading "religion" we group a broad range of explanations of phenomena and practices which the Egyptians pursued over three millennia. What makes it so difficult for us is that logically consistent arrangement and explanation in the modern sense were not part of their thinking.

Modern writers who seek an orderly summary of Egyptian beliefs consequently face defeat from the outset. It was an age more innocent than ours because there was far less to divide it. The Egyptians lived before the development of natural science created a rival channel for the thoughts of clever men. Yet the natural inclination to curiosity and to complexity was there, and confronted the basic problems of life, death, the dichotomy of order and chaos, and the nature of the universe with a riot of colourful mythology untainted by

doubt. They lived also before the corrosive idea of monotheism and its inevitable rejection of the beliefs of others had gained much ground, and so they speculated in an atmosphere of total equanimity, where the idea of false gods and wrong beliefs had no place. They did not follow our rules, and so we are not in a position to judge Egyptian religious texts and to say which represented a greater feat of intellect than others.

What can modern, Western man make of it? Not a lot, it seems, to judge from most attempts at explanation, both professional and amateur. There is, however, an escape route. Since by "religion" we mean virtually the entire intellectual matrix of ancient Egypt, we can observe and describe many of its workings through a survey of Egyptian history, architecture, burial customs and so on. The reader becomes an outside observer but is left on safe ground. This is the traditional approach, and Rosalie David's book adheres to it. The very arrangement of the book is strictly chronological. It begins with the late prehistoric period, where guesswork has to rule, and proceeds through the pyramid age (the Old Kingdom), the civil wars of the First Intermediate Period, the period of classic literature and taste (the Middle Kingdom) and finally the imperial age of the New Kingdom. Section by section, religious texts of each period and the religious sides to different aspects of society are briefly described. Nearly a third of the book is taken up with appendices, which the novice will find very useful: they

include much further reading, translations of some of the key documents and a gazetteer of religious sites with descriptive notes.

The author's brisk and businesslike approach mirrors the way in which modern scholarship, unable to cope with Egyptian religion as a revelatory phenomenon, has retreated to political explanation. This is very apparent in the case of King Akhenaten, who shocked mid-fourteenth century ac Egypt with a short-lived but dramatic shift in theological emphasis, which brought the first hint of a coming world of intellectual division. Dr David is entirely accurate when she writes: "More recently this concept of a visionary ruler has been replaced by the view that Akhenaten was a political opportunist who introduced a new supreme deity in order to destroy the power of Amen-Re and his priesthood." Was this all there really was to it? Or is the author just one of many victims of the bankruptcy of modern scholarship?

Oddly, the book more or less ends with Akhenaten. Yet another thousand years lay ahead, and it was during the latest phases that some of the features of Egyptian religion that have left their greatest impression on the popular view of ancient Egypt arose. In particular, the last centuries saw, for the first time, the animal cults which demanded the mass mummification and burial of cult animals. Pilgrimage, dream interpretation, mystical healing: these and many more manifestations of religion are well documented in texts of the later periods, yet are mostly passed over. Perhaps this is a reflection of a not uncommon view that the last millennium was one of decline and superstition.

For the newcomer who wants a sensible and accurate introduction to the basic shapes of Egyptian religion this book will serve well enough. It does not provoke or worry. It belongs to the tradition of Egyptology as a tradition that has been responsible for much of the financing of Egyptological research in the past.

## Resourceful responses

G. W. Dimbleby

M. R. JARMAN, G. N. BAILEY  
and H. N. JARMAN (Editors)

*Early European Agriculture: Its Foundations and Development*  
283pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£25.  
0 521 24359 9

This is the third volume by the British Academy Major Research Project on the Early History of Agriculture. The first two, *Papers in Economic Prehistory and Palaeoecology*, were edited by Eric Higgs, who was involved in the early stages of preparation for this volume before he died, and to whom it is dedicated.

The first three chapters of *Early European Agriculture* are a fully argued exposition of the theoretical bases of the project. These centre on the concept of territorial analysis which the team developed and adopted, but which has drawn criticism from various quarters. The editors are obviously sensitive to such criticism and have gone to some lengths to answer it. Some reservations will remain, but the mass of results presented here not only have a coherence but also make sense even though they may go against accepted doctrine. Slash-and-burn is but for most of Europe, pure nomadism may never have existed, and the megalith builders were primarily pastoralists.

The project team has not only carried out, or drawn upon, a great deal of field-work on the earliest Neolithic sites in many parts of Europe, but has also devoted much attention to pre-Neolithic economies. The areas covered have been grouped under the following chapter headings: coastal lakes and littorals; the lowlands; the uplands; and an interesting chapter devoted to the megaliths. Principles have emerged that can be demonstrated from site to site; in itself is some token of their validity.

One of the planks in the arguments put forward is that changes in economy came about in response to population pressure on resources. This is demonstrable in pre-agricultural periods as well as later. In fact it is suggested that some "agricultural" practices such as intensive domestication could even have occurred in the Palaeolithic. Until domestication, actually, produced structural change it would not be

recognizable. The book contains a number of such theories for which there can be no concrete evidence, but before condemning these as speculation it must be recognized that some widely accepted archaeological views are apparently no better founded.

The indigenous Mesolithic was probably the end-point of a long period of development of animal exploitation. Economic studies have turned up some unexpected conclusions; for example, coastal sites, even those with huge shell middens, were probably primarily dependent on terrestrial and not marine resources. When arable farming came along, the resource it needed was cultivable soil, so sites were often in very different situations from those of the Mesolithic. In upland areas, which may have been exploited by Neolithic transhumance for summer grazing, there was a closer resource interest, and some sites in the uplands showed a transition from dependence on wild animals to the use of introduced domestic stock. The first appearance of Neolithic agriculture therefore can vary from a complete break with what has gone before to an apparent transition.

Increasing population, along with new and developing technology, acting on available resources, would have produced new circumstances, in which "individual" and "population fitness" would have led to a better-adapted genotype. This, the authors believe, would in turn have led to behavioural change. Indeed they see this line as the most promising way ahead for future research. It must be remembered, however, that natural selection acts on individuals, not on populations, and the same would be true of behaviour, in so far as it is genetically determined, which, in itself, is very much a moot point.

For myself I would see the way ahead in different terms. There are places in this book where the writers are either unfamiliar with, or have overlooked, alternative sources of knowledge. For example, from the Butser Iron Age Farm Project show that emper has a much higher protein content than modern wheat; the impenitently calls into question the validity of using modern data as a basis for estimating early resource levels. Palaeoecology, having established itself as a valid methodology, should not attempt to do alone, but needs now to link itself with complementary lines of research relevant to this crucial period of our past.

## Peoples of the Sea

Kenneth Kitchen

TRUDE DOTHAN

*The Philistines and their Material Culture*  
310pp. Yale University Press. £30.  
0 300 02258 1

This beautifully printed volume is a revised and updated version of Trude Dothan's work on the Philistines first published in Hebrew in 1967. While the volume is dated 1982, the acknowledgments are dated 1979, and the bibliography reaches to 1978; thus, developments in the past three or four years could perhaps not be included or taken into account.

The work has six chapters followed by a comprehensive bibliography and index. Chapter One succinctly reviews the historical sources for the Philistines in south-west Palestine (to which they gave their name) during the thirteenth to tenth centuries BC – the period of their definitive settlement there and greatest power, until contained by the efforts of David and Solomon. It is within this period, and radiating out from this area, that archaeological sites have yielded distinctive remains – pottery, clay coffins, a form of rock-cut tomb, remains of temples – which have consequently acquired the epithet "Philistine". When they came to Canaan, the Philistines were one of a group of peoples (peoples of the Sea, in ancient Egyptian terms). In so far as some of these groups are indistinguishable from each other in dress, etc., in the Egyptian pictorial record (the only one we have), the term "Philistine" has to cover Philistines proper, Tjekker and Danuna. With that qualification, also made by Mrs Dothan, the coincidence of the historical sources and the archaeological remains in space and time fully justifies the overall term "Philistine".

Chapters Two to Five are the solid heart of the book. First, a lucid, critical survey of twenty-eight major, and a dozen minor, sites having Philistine remains, especially pottery and burials. Second, a clear survey (well illustrated) of the types of pottery and

their characteristic decoration, and "sub-chapter" (Four) on Philistines which most attention is given to an anthropoid clay coffin with the grotesquely modelled face-like final chapter essays to chart the principal dates of Philistine settlement and expansion in Canaan until curbed by the Hebrew kings.

From properly observed stratigraphic excavations, the pottery had three main phases: fine ware, painted Mycenaean-inspired (most of a twelfth century BC), then similar ware of slightly lower quality, and finally having red slip and brown decor, with changing forms and motifs, as the Philistines became steadily more assimilated culturally to the Canaanite and Hebrew neighbours. The clay coffins were not imported by the Philistines, but adopted by them under Egyptian influence. (One recalling that some Egyptian contingents served with Egyptian forces from the first years of Ramses II, at the Battle of Qadesh, (1274 BC).

Absolute chronology in this rests on Egyptian dates. Unfortunately, Mrs Dothan opts for the Cambridge Ancient History dates, some twenty years ago – reasonable enough then, but up to a quarter-century too high today. Meryptah now is c. 1213-1203 (not 1230), and Ramses III nearer 1185/7 than 1191. The supposed scarabs of Ramses VIII give Mrs Dothan some unease, and rightly so, because they are a reality scarabs of statues of Ramses II (as established by Yoyotte in 1949). This limits the possible span of use of some tombs. The rest of her chronology is acceptable. If Egyptian key-dates are lowered by about twenty-five years from the beginning, and by about a decade for the twelfth and early eleventh centuries BC.

The author has provided a well articulated handbook which, in new form, should be a boon to all scholar and serious students of the Ancient Near East whose work and interests involve them with the material legacy of the ancient Philistines.

## Worlds on which the sun set

Crispin Tickell

NIGEL DAVIES

*The Ancient Kingdom of Mexico*  
272pp. Allen Lane. £12.50.  
0 7139 1245 6

The societies of ancient Mexico, which came to so abrupt an end between 1519 and 1521, had common origins and common characteristics. All depended on maize (itself an invention of the early peoples of the mountain plateau); all shared similar traditions of thought and religion; all developed high art in forms which show continuity over thousands of years; and all except the last – conform to a cycle of growth, success and internal collapse. The Aztecs believed the sun would cease to rise on their world, the fifth since creation. Indeed this belief contributed to the paralysis of nerve, which led to their destruction at the hands of a bunch of desperadoes from the east, equipped with iron, guns, horses and viruses from the Old World.

In this book Nigel Davies traces what he describes as the four "cultural" cultures of what is now Mexico: the Olmecs of the Gulf coast, from around 1200 to 100 BC; the people of Teotihuacan in the Valley of Mexico, from around 200 BC to 750 AD; their successors the Toltecs from Tula to the north of the Valley from around 800 to 1150 AD; and finally the Aztecs in the great city of Tenochtitlan, on which the modern city of Mexico is built, for the last hundred years before the conquest. As Dr Davies acknowledges, this approach is inevitably artificial. Maya civilization, whose roots were Olmec and whose influence in the south was as great as that of Teotihuacan in the north, is thereby

excluded. So are the Zapotecs and Mixtecs of Oaxaca, and the peoples of the city of El Tajin and their successors on the Gulf coast. What society can be regarded as regional and what as ecumenical is open to argument. Certainly they were all entangled with each other. Even if the fabric of pre-Hispanic society was richly diverse, its underlying unity was clear from its slow beginnings to its quick end.

The difficulty for the historian lies in the nature of the evidence. Reading backwards, our knowledge of Aztec society is fairly good. We have the written accounts of the Spaniards (often mean anthropologists), those of the pre-Hispanic peoples themselves, sometimes through their surviving painted books, and the archaeological remains which pepper central America. But further into the past the evidence rapidly diminishes, and the Toltecs, Teotihuacanos, and Olmecs we have to rely on the archaeological evidence, with myth, extrapolation from the sixteenth century and the influences of modern anthropology. Much can be concocted from these materials, but the results are inevitably partial and uncertain. The spread of a technique of pottery-making or of a particular architectural design cannot usefully be given a political or military interpretation. The huge grass-covered mounds still awaiting excavation could radically change the existing picture. The theology of the Aztecs is too fragmentary to guide the beliefs of a thousand years earlier. We have only to imagine ourselves trying to apply these methods to European history.

Given these handicaps, Davies does well. He has brought together contributions from many disciplines, and set them out in brief, easy and readable form. He has a particular gift

for sympathetic re-creation of the framework of existence in the societies under review and he conveys something of what it must have been like to have lived in these. His chapters on the Aztecs are particularly eloquent and lucid. Under his guidance it is almost difficult to understand the state of mind which called for ever increasing sacrifice of human lives to ensure the good health of the sun and those warmed and nourished by it.

For future editions of what deserves to be a popular book, it might be well to get away from the notion that these societies were either kingdoms or empires in our sense of those terms. We simply do not know how Olmec, Teotihuacanos, or Toltecs governed themselves, or what political relationships they had with others. The early period is too hazy. There were around seven centuries, more than four, ice ages when the Bering Straits would have been a possible passage-way for animals and people between Asia and America. Who they were, into what other peoples they fell, and whether other peoples reached America by other means, are still matters of controversy with which Davies does rather summarily. There may also be doubts about some of his anthropological deductions from Olmec sculpture. The colossal heads, the jade masks with white eyes, and the quincunx figures in stone and gold seem to come perfectly out of the darkness of the long past.

Any history of pre-Hispanic America ends in sadness. What are the ugly aspects of this rich, populated, unevenly sophisticated society, its obliterated by zeal for gold? Spaniards, driven by the most primitive of motives, the result of the expansion of European

## SOCIAL STUDIES

## Pinpointing the poor

Rudolf Klein

MURIEL BROWN and NICOLA MADGE

*Despite the Welfare State: A Report on the SSRC/DHSS Programme of Research into Transmitted Deprivation*  
389pp. Heinemann Educational.  
£45.  
0 35 82096 6

THOMAS WILSON and DOROTHY J. WILSON

*The Political Economy of the Welfare State*  
219pp. Allen and Unwin. £15.  
£5.95 (pb).  
0 04 33077 7

Once upon a time the social sciences had no greater admirer than Sir Keith Joseph. In a previous incarnation as Secretary of State for the Social Services in the Heath administration, it was to him that he looked for guidance. When he reorganized the National Health Service, it was to the management experts that he turned for help. When he wanted to deal with a problem of poverty, it was to the Social Science Research Council that he turned for help. Yet ten years later, as the born-again Secretary of State for Education in the Thatcher Government, Sir Keith has emerged as the scourge of the social scientists and the hammer of the SSRC. Never one to do things by half, and much given to least-favouring inquests on his past mistakes, he has swung full circle. The line affair has turned sour.

To understand Sir Keith's volte face, and find the key to his disillusionment, we have to go back to the book by Muriel Brown and Nicola Madge. This, in effect, an end-of-term report on the SSRC's programme on transmitted deprivation which was launched by Sir Keith in 1972 and which involved over seventy academics working on thirty-four projects of various kinds: the most ambitious attempt yet made to harness the social sciences to the concerns of policy-makers. And while *Despite the Welfare State* is primarily concerned to distil the findings of the projects approved by the research programme, it also contains the illuminating study of the relationship between social scientists and policy-makers: a relationship which, the evidence would seem to suggest, is destined to end in a mutual sense of betrayal.

In launching the research programme, Sir Keith was not only impelled by a general concern about poverty in a society which was spending an ever-increasing proportion of the national income on social welfare. But he defined his concern in a very specific way: it was with the transmission of deprivation from generation to generation. If only the cycle of deprivation could be broken – if means could be found of preventing problem families creating problem children, and so *de capo* – it would be possible to deal with self-perpetuating poverty. Like all problem children, Sir Keith's programme was about the kind of solutions that work. It was therefore the aim of public policy to devise instruments which would change these.

In responding to Sir Keith's initiative, however, the social science research community rejected both his definition of the problem and its underlying theory. Instead of concentrating on the "minority of severely and multiply deprived families" whose various problems in achieving material well-being and emotional and social adjustment appeared to be perpetuated across generations, the researchers set out to map deprivation in all its forms and dimensions. Against Sir Keith's theory of poverty rooted in family circumstances, they put a theory of poverty rooted in social circumstances; in the economic and social structure of society. As Brown and Madge put it:

The programme as a whole, then, evolved well beyond its original conception. The initial point of concern was with a particular social issue best referred to as that of the multi-problem family and its place in society. The ultimate area of study covers the extent and form of deprivation and disadvantage; patterns of continuity and discontinuity and explanations of deprivation and disadvantage; and implications for social action. The whole scope of the programme has altered and with it the bias of explanation and indeed of implication.

The programme as it finally emerged was, not surprisingly perhaps, diverse in both scope and quality. The researchers, Brown and Madge point out, asked different questions and used different methodological approaches: "Indeed there are as many definitions of deprivation employed by researchers as there are studies". What had started out as a research programme designed to address itself to a discrete, specific problem, thus turned out in the event to be an exercise in demonstrating that the extent of the problem was far greater, and its nature far more complex, than assumed in the original definition. Instead of providing policy instruments, the programme demonstrated the peculiarly intractable nature of the issue by documenting the scale of deprivation and disadvantage in our society; instead of solving problems for the policy-makers, it created embarrassment for them by underlining the failure of the attempts to eradicate poverty. For once the scope of the programme was widened, the final conclusion reached followed almost automatically: that "much deprivation is deeply rooted in the structure of our society and affected by the network of unequal opportunities and life chances that the structure maintains".

No wonder Sir Keith felt betrayed. If his own theory of the cycle of deprivation was not entirely dismissed – some of the research indicates that it appears to hold water, if only for a minority of the disadvantaged – it had been largely ignored. From his perspective, the programme of research had been subverted, and used by the research community to pursue its own ideological preoccupations with mapping the extent of poverty in our society.

Similarly, the research community has felt betrayed. From his perspective, it was only asked to test a "hypothesis" – the phrase used by Michael Posner, the Chairman of the SSRC, in his introduction to the book – and it did so using the methodology of the discipline. For the customer of the research to complain that it had not come up with the expected answer is surely unreasonable.

In a sense, both are right. From Sir Keith's point of view, it was not unreasonable to expect that the social science community would actually address the question he had asked, instead of the question he ought to have asked in the opinion of the researchers. From the point of view of the social science community, it was not unreasonable to redefine the problem in a way which fitted into its model of the world; after all, no one would dream of setting the natural sciences a problem based on the presupposition that the earth is flat.

But, of course, the trouble is that politicians and social scientists inevitably use different models of the world. The former are concerned to define problems in such a way that they become soluble in terms of their own preconceptions of the feasible; it is a search for simplicity and tractability. If assuming that the earth is flat makes it easier to devise policy solutions, then no matter. In contrast, the social sciences are concerned with defining problems accurately, the nature of problems, not with finding acceptable policy solutions. Their bias is to document social problems, not to solve them: their skill tends to lie in demonstrating complexity and underlining the failures of policy.

If differences in intellectual languages are compounded by differences in underlying ideology – as they undoubtedly were in the case of the cycle of deprivation – then the result is inevitably a dialogue of the deaf. For what really distinguishes most of the social sciences from the natural

sciences is that the former inescapably make value judgments when defining problems. Consider, for example, the vast literature on poverty: here, as the Wilsons make clear in their admirable introduction to *The Political Economy of the Welfare State*, competing statistics of poverty reflect competing assumptions about what the appropriate benchmarks for measuring deprivation should be. Depending on the assumptions made, the figures can either be inflated or deflated. But, to concede a point to Sir Keith, there is precious little science about the way those benchmarks are formulated – although scientific techniques may be used in the process of measurement once the assumptions have been made. So the real contribution of the academic community has often to do less with the application of pretty rudimentary "scientific" techniques than with the scholarly dissection of the nature of the value judgments being

made and the trade-offs involved in policy choices. Ironically, therefore, if Sir Keith were to succeed in forcing the SSRC to change its name, this might well be to the advantage of the academic community. On balance, it may be more sensible to aspire to first-class scholarship and intellectual analysis than to what (by the criteria of the natural sciences) will always be a second-class form of science.

But whether or not the SSRC changes its name, the Brown and Madge study suggests that friction between the academic community and the politicians will continue. The cycle of deprivation programme, as documented in their book, hardly shows the research community at its best: the researchers climbed on to the financial bandwagon, intent on pursuing their own individual interests rather than on addressing themselves to their brief, or working out a coherent package. But to the extent

that it did manage to produce at least some good research, its effect was to antagonize the SSRC's paymasters. Moreover, this effect was – as I have sought to argue – inevitable, given the antagonistic interests of the two parties concerned. So the uncomfortable conclusion from this case study may well be that the social sciences can expect little except niggardly support from any government unless politicians start valuing the academic community against all precedent – in terms of its contribution to the quality of intellectual debate about policy, as distinct from looking to it for instant policy fixes for their immediate problems. Certainly, if only politicians could be persuaded that this is what the social sciences do best, there would be less risk of another Keith Joseph turning on the SSRC in a fit of disappointment, as excessive expectations lead to excessive disillusionment.

## Pills in perspective

Donald Gould

ARABELLA MELVILLE and COLIN JOHNSON

*Cured to Death: The Effects of Prescription Drugs*  
261pp. Seeker and Warburg. £8.50.  
0 56 27686 0

The authors of *Cured to Death* make no bones about their purpose, and start Chapter One with a bang, stating that "Western medicine has made a fundamental error in allowing itself to become reliant upon the universal use of drug therapy". The next 100,000 words or so are devoted to supporting this thesis, and governments, doctors, patients, and (most particularly, of course) the pharmaceutical industry all come in for their share of the blame.

Everybody who ever reads a newspaper or watches television knows that modern synthetic medicines have side-effects which can be serious (like death). The thalidomide affair punched that unhappy truth into our collective consciousness, and we are reminded of the fact at regular intervals, most recently by the withdrawal of Opren after it was discovered that this pill for relieving the pain and swelling of arthritis (which it often accomplished very well) was killing an undue proportion of its users.

Arabella Melville and Colin Johnson naturally (gleefully, perhaps) provide

details of the more notorious drug disasters of the past couple of decades, together with some harrowing case histories. But only a tiny proportion of users suffer death or dramatic harm from medicines, such as blindness or cancer or grave anaemia, and the important aspect of the story told in *Cured to Death* is the manner in which our addiction to pills and potions results in a massive amount of lesser suffering, and how it distorts the pattern of medical care.

Britain, with a population of 56 million, is getting through around 350 million NHS prescriptions each year, which amounts to just over half-a-dozen packages of potential poisons for every man, woman and child in the land, for there is no such thing as a safe drug. Illness resulting from this massive distribution of dangerous chemicals is now responsible for about five per cent of hospital admissions, and some 30 per cent of hospital patients suffer some kind of unwanted effects from medicines administered during their stay. The numbers similarly afflicted within the community at large must be enormous. Melville and Johnson offer the estimate of over one million significant adverse drug reactions occurring in Britain every year, and this is probably the order of the problem.

Of course many, but by no means all, of the 2,000-odd prescription drugs available can relieve suffering and save lives when properly used, as the authors of this treatise somewhat

grudgingly concede. The trouble is that many of these powerful compounds are so often misused. Not long ago the then chairman of Britain's official Medicines Commission said to me that "Doctors of my generation, particularly those in general practice (because hospital doctors do pick up a certain amount of information) have no idea how to use, I suppose, ninety per cent of modern drugs". And a High Street chemist, a past president of the Pharmaceutical Society, has described the prescribing habits of doctors as "diabolical". Melville and Johnson argue that the public trust in the myth of "a pill for every ill", the doctors' lack of understanding of modern medicines, and the drug industry's aggressive and extremely skillful marketing techniques, all combine to ensure that excessive and inappropriate prescribing is commonplace.

Three-quarters of all consultations in general practice in Britain end with the issue of a prescription. This is the easiest way to resolve these usually grotesquely brief confrontations between doctors and their customers to the instant satisfaction of those involved. Something positive has been done, never mind whether or not it is the best that could have been done. However, one GP I know has managed to cut his prescribing to one fifth of the national average without apparent detriment to his clientele, who, after some original resistance, now actually count themselves fortunate and well cared-for.

## Toys

A costermonger's stall  
With plastic fruit  
Stand in the rain,  
A flyweight interval  
Across the blurring pans  
Where damaged toys distort  
July's ill-discipline.

A beige and partly torn  
Old cowboy hat  
Thrown by a gust  
Of wind across the lawn  
Has finally gone west;  
A scooter, with a flat  
Front tyre, has been seen.

Rain fills a cracked teapot,  
Contrives to miss  
A furled dog  
Out daughter once forgot.  
A trenchant rubber frog  
Squats wary of all this  
Innocent catalogue.

Within the warm back room  
I turn to reach  
The travel guide,  
Expectantly resume  
The chill, elusive tide,  
As distances increase  
And waves and land collide.

John Levett

Arabella Melville is described on the dust-jacket as a psychologist and Colin Johnson as a freelance journalist; so neither has first-hand experience of the problems they describe (except, perhaps, as patients). But they have read and consulted widely, and list over 500 references in support of their claims and arguments. Sometimes they make dubious assertions, and the text as a whole is marred by occasional errors of fact and case. But that is fair enough, given the stated purpose of the work.

Doubtless the pharmaceutical industry and a good many doctors will rail against *Cured to Death*, seeing it as a biased and unbalanced piece of propaganda. And doubtless the authors will expect no less. They can console themselves that despite the bias, and some challengeable statements and conclusions, they have made out a convincing case for the prosecution. It is time we came to our senses in the matter of our use of modern medicines.

*The Other Britain*, edited by Paul Barker (260pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £9.95. 0 7100 9308 X) is a selection of some thirty-odd essays, all of which originally appeared in the magazine *New Society*, whose twentieth anniversary is marked by this book. The collection is intended to highlight and celebrate the variety and contrast of British ways of life. Contributors include Angela Carter, Jeremy Seabrook, Paul Harrison, Ian Walker and Lincoln Allison.



